

# 2022 Otter Tail County Public Health ANNUAL REPORT

The Otter Tail County Public Health (OTCPH) department works to protect, maintain, and improve the health of all people who call Otter Tail County home. The work of the department falls within the six areas of public health responsibility set forth in the Local Public Health Act. Minn. Stat. § 145A.04 , subd. 1a

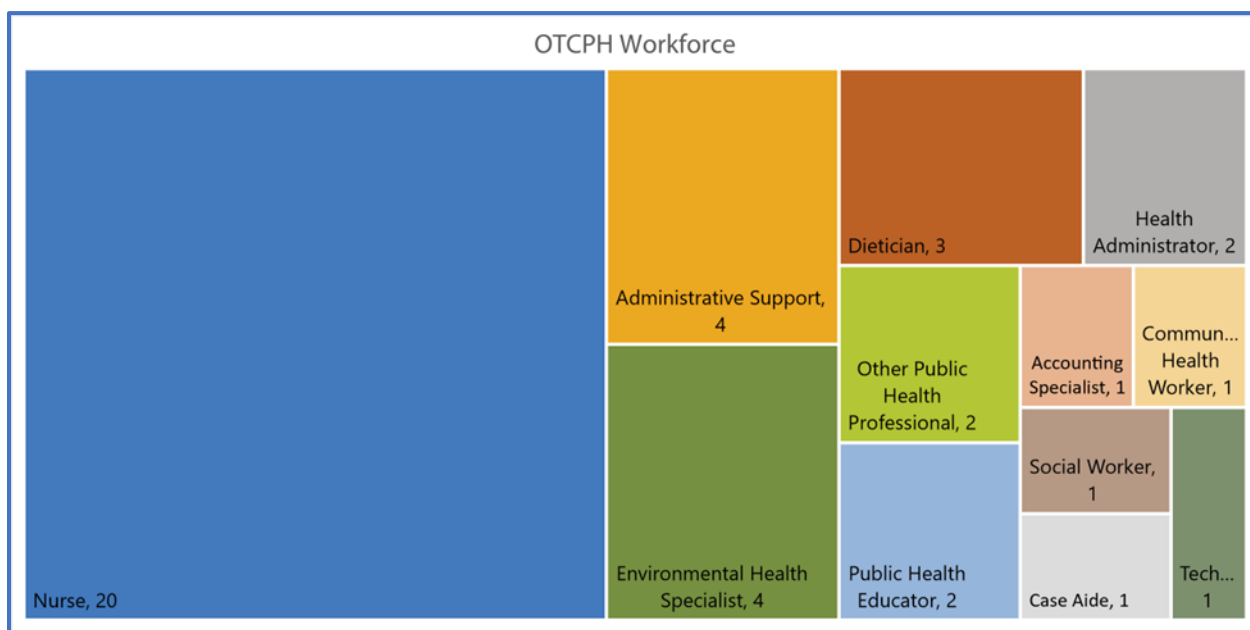
## Assure an Adequate Local Public Health Infrastructure

*Assuring an adequate local public health infrastructure means maintaining the basic capacities foundational to a well-functioning public health system.*

### Workforce

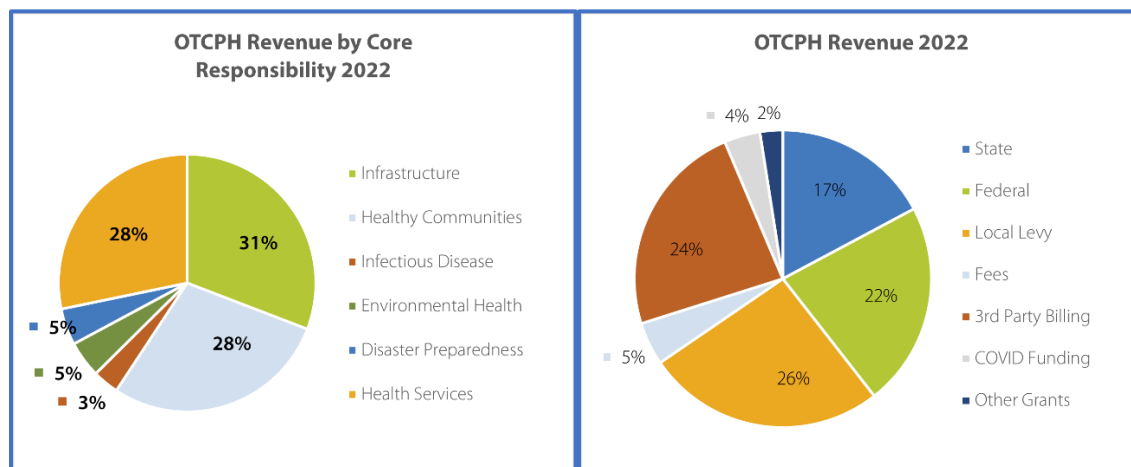
According to analysis of the 2021 Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey, more than a quarter of national employees are considering leaving their organization within the next year. For OTCPH, our staff response was like that of the nation. With nearly 10% intending to, and subsequently leaving in 2022, and 20% planning to retire in the next 5 years.

As staffing changes impact the department, OTCPH workforce diversification continues to assure a strong department that can address individual and community/population health needs.



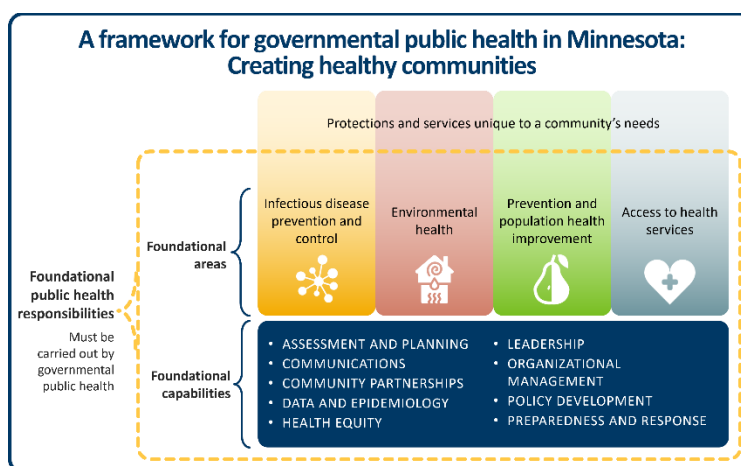
## Funding

The department has just under 40 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$4.3 million in local, state, federal and fee-based funds.



## Foundational Public Health Responsibilities

The State of MN continues toward implementation of a new framework for public health services. The framework represents the work governmental public health must do, and the important work governmental public health does, to meet the unique needs of communities across the state. In 2022, Partnership4Health Community Health Board (P4H CHB) was awarded a 2- year infrastructure grant to build local capacity around data and epidemiology. OTCPH has active participation in this work.



## Community Health Assessment & Planning

In the previous planning cycle, P4H CHB/OTCPH identified mental and dental health as two of the top health priorities to address. These priorities continued to inform programs, staffing, and grant applications in 2022.

# Promote Healthy Communities and Healthy Behavior

*Promoting healthy communities and healthy behaviors means activities that improve health in a population.*

## Family Home Visiting Program

Registered Nurses offer pregnant and parenting families support, information, and referrals to community resources. Nurses provide education and tools that help promote an enjoyable Parent-Child relationship and encourage healthy social-emotional and physical development of the child.

P4H CHB /OTCPH provides two evidence-based family home visiting programs:

- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) - [Nurse-Family Partnership](https://nursefamilypartnership.org) - Helping First-Time Parents Succeed (nursefamilypartnership.org)
- Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-Visiting Program (MECSH)- [Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-Visiting](https://nhvrc.org) - National Home Visiting Resource Center (nhvrc.org)

NFP & MECSH & nonevidence based visits (clients served):

- 62 MECSH Families (34)
- 51 NFP Families (48)

## Women, Infants & Children Nutrition Program (WIC)

WIC is a health and nutrition program and provides a variety of healthy foods. WIC staff can answer nutrition and breastfeeding questions and refer families to other resources. Since the pandemic, WIC has seen an increased number of families participating in WIC serves, believed to likely be related to ease and convenience of telephonic and remote visits. They have averaged



- 1,364 monthly OTCPH participation-representing all women, responsible parties, infants and children served.
- Up from 1,238 last summer

## Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

PartnerSHIP4Health (P4H) is a collaboration of the Local Public Health agencies in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties and other community partners working to prevent chronic disease through sustainable changes that increase physical activity, healthy eating and reduce tobacco use and exposure. P4H is at work with schools, worksites, communities, health care, childcare and human service organizations.

## Resources For Seniors

The Aging Coordinator provides assistance to individuals aged 60 and above in Otter Tail County who are in need of services. The position is funded, in part, through a grant from the Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging.

The coordinator is available to do home visits, meet with clubs or organizations, and do consultation by telephone or email. There are no charges for the coordinator's services.

Over the past 12 months, the Aging Coordinator had 351 contacts-providing support to Otter Tail County residents with ongoing goal projections of reach closer to 500 contacts during the next grant cycle.

## THRIVE

A community-based mental wellbeing program that aims to promote health through happiness and meaning. 2022 THRIVE highlights include partnering with a local school district, outreach at community events and meetings, receiving a \$50,000 grant to support program implementation, working with the Otter Tail County Communications team as well as creating and printing numerous materials for outreach.



## Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

A multi-disciplinary group of individuals working together to create a comprehensive plan for suicide prevention efforts. The goal of these efforts is to achieve maximum impact on mental health promotion and suicide prevention in our communities. The planning group met throughout 2022 to assess the county's mental health needs and select priorities to improve mental health promotion efforts. Planning group representatives came from diverse backgrounds.

## Safe Communities Coalition Coordination



The mission of the coalition is to raise awareness of traffic safety issues and to develop tools that can be used to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from traffic accidents in Minnesota. Members represent agencies including education, public health, engineering, law enforcement, public safety and emergency medical and trauma services. The interdisciplinary approach is used to reduce deaths on Otter Tail County roads.

In 2022, the coalition promoted traffic safety messages, weekly "Message Monday's," and educational messaging was shared with and displayed on electronic billboards. In addition, a Teen Driver Safety Communication plan was developed and shared with area schools at the start of the 2022 school year.

## Dental Innovations

The Partnership4Health CHB shares a fulltime Oral Health Consultant working across Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties which is fully funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield. Focus projects include increasing access to preventative and restorative dental care (in partnership with Apple Tree Dental as well as private dental providers) to residents in this region-more specifically, under and uninsured residents. Regionally, work is occurring to bring a new dental clinic accepting medical assistance and uninsured clients to Frazee, MN.

Additional collaborative work under this grant includes educating children about the importance of good oral health. In 2023:

- 4,760 students received oral health education in 27 schools and 20 districts across the P4HCHB

## Car Seat Safety

OTCPH partners with UCare, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and OTC car seat passenger safety technician, Eric Lien, to distribute seats and educate on car seat safety.

- 90 issued in 2022 (25)



## Prevent the Spread of Communicable Disease

*Preventing the spread of infectious disease means preventing diseases that are caused by infectious agents.*

### Animal Bite Investigations

OTCPH coordinates with the Sherriff's Office to carry out the Animal Bite and Dangerous Dog ordinance. The Public Health department role is on the prevention of rabies exposures and transmission. More broadly, staff support the public on what to do if bitten by an animal. Animal bites reported include dogs, cats, bats, and other animals.

- 85 Animal bites (85)

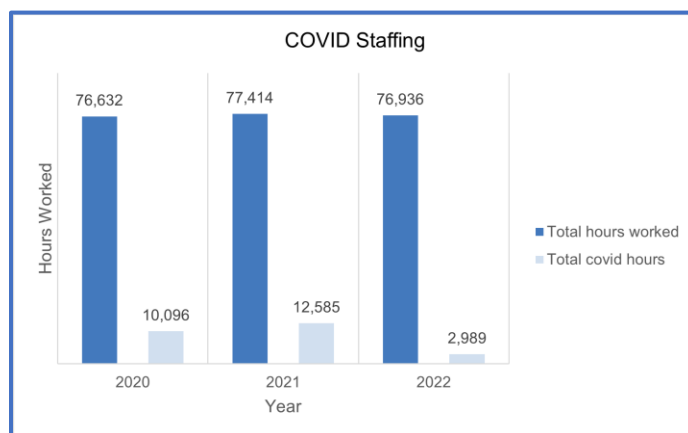
### Immunizations

Immunizations, sometimes referred to vaccinations or shots, are one of the best weapons we have against a number of serious diseases. OTCPH participates in the Minnesota Vaccine for Children Program (MNVFC) and the Uninsured and Underinsured Adult Vaccine Program (UUAV). These programs reduce barriers for vaccine access and help to ensure children and adults can be up to date on routine and recommended immunizations. In addition, the department offers the influenza vaccine annually, as well as COVID-19 vaccine to the broader OTC community.

- 1,785 Immunizations administered (10,170)

### COVID-19 Pandemic Response

In the summer of 2022, the Public Health incident command structure for COVID-19 response ended. Disease Prevention and Control staff continued to maintain broad situational awareness and offer education and support to the community to help understand how to protect themselves and others, and what to do if you test positive or are exposed to COVID-19. In addition, staff continued to provide vaccination and testing kits to support the community.



## Tuberculosis & Perinatal Hepatitis B Case Management

In 2022, six individuals received case management for Latent Tuberculosis, assuring they received weekly, or monthly medications for 3-9 months, depending upon the medication regimen prescribed.

Additionally, we worked with 5 families and their healthcare providers by providing phone case management to pregnant moms positive for Hepatitis B, supporting timely newborn vaccines as well as serology testing and follow up reporting back to the MN Dept of Health.

## Sexual Transmitted Disease Prevention

Although the public health department does not provide direct preconception health, family planning or sexually transmitted infection/disease (STI/ STD) testing, we partner with local resources to refer individuals for support, guidance and testing. As a grantee of the MDH condom distribution program, we helped distribute over 1500 condoms in 2022 into the community as a prevention measure.

## Protect Against Environmental Health Hazards

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*Protecting against environmental health hazards means addressing aspects of the environment that pose risks to human health.*

### Public Health Nuisance

A public health nuisance is any activity or failure to act that adversely affects the health of the public. Registered Sanitarians and the Environmental Health Coordinator work to address environmental concerns county wide.

- 44 Total Public Health Nuisance Referrals (16):
  - 3 Structural
  - 8 Sanitation
  - 7 Environmental
  - 5 Housing
  - 21 Solid Waste

### Food, Pools, And Lodging Delegation

Partnership4Health CHB is responsible for addressing health and safety requirements for food and beverage, lodging, mobile home parks, campgrounds, swimming pools and youth camps within Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties.

Otter Tail County inspections completed in 2022:

- 47 Vacation Home Rentals (VHR)
- 131 Lodging Establishments
- 25 Pools
- 260 Food and Beverage Establishments

### Reduce Lead Exposure

OTCPH participates in the Minnesota Department of Health Lead & Healthy Homes Program. Staff provide lead exposure prevention education, support to individuals exposed to lead, and refer to resources.

- 8 Referrals Received (18)

## Prepare and Respond to Emergencies

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Preparing and responding to emergencies means engaging in activities that prepare public health departments to respond to events and incidents and assist communities in recovery.

### Staff Readiness

Staff support operational know-how to ensure the public health department is ready to respond. This work includes updating departmental emergency response plans, departmental training, coordination with local health care partners, the county Emergency Manager, and ongoing participation in the West Central Region Health Care Coalition.

### Response

The departmental goal is to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of public health emergencies. To improve our departmental ability to respond in the future, multiple after-action reviews were completed at various stages of the pandemic. Staff completed surveys and interviews to give feedback on the departmental pandemic response. We will compile this information and identify areas of strength and opportunity. This will help support the agency response moving forward for COVID-19 and other future emergencies.

## Assure Health Services

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*Assuring health services means engaging in activities such as assessing the availability of health-related services and health care providers in local communities; identifying gaps and barriers; convening community partners to improve community health systems; and providing services identified as priorities by the local assessment and planning process.*

### Child & Teen Checkup Outreach (C&TC)

Outreach to families with children birth through age 20 who are enrolled in Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.



Promotes age-appropriate preventative health services.

- 3,812 Active cases (3,831)
- 7,288 Active children (7,722)
- 3,373 Said “Yes” to C&TC (3,460)
- 12,943 Total outreach activities (16,848)

### Long Term Services and Supports Programs

Medical Assistance (MA) home care and Minnesota waiver programs pay for a range of medical and health care-related support services. These services enable low-income Minnesotans, who are elderly or who have disabilities, to live as independently as possible in their communities. Waivers refer to home and community-based services available under a federal Medicaid waiver as an alternative to institutional care.

Interdisciplinary teams in Public Health and Human Services support these programs.

- 629 individuals with disabilities received waiver services and case management (538)
- 1,099 persons received care coordination and services through Secure Blue and UCare Community Well, UCare Nursing Home and UCare Special needs care coordination programs (846)



## MnCHOICES Assessments

Assessments are provided by staff using a person- centered planning approach to help people make decisions about long-term services and supports. This assessment is an in-person visit, usually where the person lives and there is no cost for the assessment. The MnCHOICES assessment team is a multi-disciplinary team composed of Public Health Nurses and Human Services Social Workers/Assessors.

- 1,247 Assessments and Annual reassessments provided (1155)

## Refugee Health

OTCPH partners with MDH and community organizations, like Lutheran Social Services Refugee Services, to offer all refugees that arrive in OTC appropriate follow-up, referral, and/or community-based health education.

In 2022, no families were served.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**OTTER TAIL COUNTY**

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